A

PERSUASIVE

To the STUDY of the

REVELATION:

OR,

An EXPOSITION of the Three first Verses of that PROPHECY.

WHEREIN

There is an Account given of the *Unintelligibleness* of the Revelation for a long time, *viz.* Till the Time it self prefixes for the Understanding of its own Visions.

Dr. *Hammond*'s Key taken from [*things shortly to come to pass*] and [*seal not the Prophecy*] is shewn to be a mistaken one.

That neither the Doctor himself, nor any one else in his time, understood the meaning of those Passages.

That it can proceed from no better Cause, than Injudiciousness or Unfaithfulness in these Mysteries, to take Exceptions at our Modern Protestant Expositions of the Revelation, upon the account of Novelty.

By *Wal. Garrett*, Rector of *Everly*.

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searching what or what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signifie, &c. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister. 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

Science has no Enemy but the Ignorant. Gnom.

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The PREFACE.

THAT the Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God, as the Wiſdom of God is with the World, (1 Cor. i. 18, 24. iii. 19.) appears in nothing more than in thoſe great and unjuſtifiable Endeavours, that have been uſed, to keep the Myſteries of this admirable Prophecy in perpetual darkneſs; at the ſame time when the bleſſed Author of it is doing all he can to recommend it to our ſerious and diligent peruſal: He does not ſuffer it to be entitled the Viſion (or Words) of the Prophet, as was uſual in former times (Iſa. i. 1. Jer. i. 1.) but the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, with this notable Addition, which God gave unto him; intimating thereby his high eſteem of the Gift for the Givers ſake. And accordingly, it is well worth our Obſervation, in what glorious, as well as graceful form of Words the Dignity of Opening (or unfolding) theſe Divine Myſteries is ſet forth to us, Rev. iv. 1, 2, 3, &c. But alas! it is but too too evident, that the Great ones of the World have very far different thoughts of it. Their Objections indeed are civil enough: I wiſh I could ſay, the ſame of their Oppoſitions too. And beſides, I ſhrewdly ſuſpect ſome to make uſe of unlawful Weapons, poyſoned Arrows; theſe I leave to the juſt Judgment of God, who is a true Beholder of all the dark paths they tread. But if any Man has a mind to traverſe the Point fairly with me, I ſhall be ready (by God's Aſſiſtance) to give him a clear and a full Anſwer to all pertinent Allegations. My Deſign at preſent is, to perſwade the Study of the Revelation to be worth our while, eſpecially at This time; and to take off the grand Objection, drawn from the Unintelligibleneſs of it. To which purpoſe I have ſhewn, That the Time when our bleſſed Saviour deſign'd to have the Revelation underſtood, is plainly noted in the Prophecy it ſelf; which is a very conſiderable circumſtance, that no former Expoſitor has been aware of; and which the Reader, I hope, will take notice of, as a good Omen of what may be expected Now, above what is to be met with in any former Interpreter. My Deſign then is, by degrees, as God ſhall enable me, to carry on the Expoſition of the Revelation to where Mr. Mede begun his, viz. to the end of the vth. Chapter. The ivth. and vth. I have done in Latin already, to try (before I was engaged too far) what the more learned ſort had to ſay againſt it; which (in point of Argument) I do not find to be diſcouraging at all. But I ſee Theſe labour under mighty Prejudices; from which the meaner ſort of Scholars being free, may prove (for ought I know) as capable of Senſe as they. I am therefore now (good Engliſh Reader) by the Bleſſing of God, preparing for thee a plain Expoſition of the Five firſt Chapters of the Revelation, a truly Noble and Divine Prophecy, (never before underſtood by any Man) extending from the Beginning of a Chriſtian Church in Rome, to the Times we Now live in. And I pray, take this Sheet of Paper, as a Specimen of what may be expected in the following. If you like This, prepare for greater Diſcoveries: and I hope this will convince thee, That the Time is now come for that Bleſſedneſs to him that Reads and Hears, and Keeps (or Obſerves) this Prophecy, Chap. i. 3. to take effect; and wherein we may ſafely affirm, without a new Revelation, That Chriſt Jeſus will not take it well of thoſe that would obſtruct the Opening of thoſe glorious Myſteries. Let nothing then diſcourage us from lending every one his helping hand towards it. For,

When Man cries, Seal the Book; and God ſays, Not: Whoſe Word ſhall ſtand? Man talks he knows not What. Study it then (good Chriſtian) and depend (what) On God's ſure Promiſe for a bleſſed End.

A Perſuaſive to the Study of the Revelation, &c.

REV. I.

Verſ. 1. THE *Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his Servants things that muſt ſhortly come to paſs: and he ſent and ſignified* them *by his Angel to his Servant* John. 2. *Who bare Record of the Word of God, and of the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things which he ſaw. Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, καὶ τηροῦντες and keep* (or obſerve) *thoſe things that are written therein; for the Time is at hand.* In which words the Book is Entitled, *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, The Diſcovery of Future things revealed or made known by Jeſus Chriſt, the Author of the Diſcovery: which Diſcovery he was enabled to make, in vertue of his Divine (not Human) Nature, *Mat.* xxiv. 36. which is the meaning of thoſe Words, *Which God gave unto him*. For hence it is, That with reſpect to his being the Author of this Prophecy, he ſo often takes upon him the Stile or Title, of the Only True God, *viz. The Firſt and the Laſt*, &c. *Rev.* i. 8, 11, 17: xxii. 13. For this very Title does *Iſaiah* ſet forth as the incommunicable Attribute of the Only True God, *Iſa.* xli. 4. xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. And hence alſo it is, That Jeſus Chriſt is called, *The Lord God of the Holy Prophets*, *Rev.* xxii. 6. *And the Lord God of the Holy Prophets ſent his Angel*, &c. For at verſe 16 of the ſame Chapter, it is ſaid of the ſame Miſſion, and the ſame Meſſenger, *I Jeſus have ſent mine Angel. Jeſus* therefore it needs muſt be, whom a little before, the Angel that was ſent, had called *The Lord God of the Holy Prophets*. And can any one now think, either that Chriſt, as a *Good Man*, would have thus intruded himſelf into the Society of the Godhead; Or, That the *JEALOUSY* of God would ever have permitted ſuch clear intimations of our Saviours Divinity to be every where interſperſed in his own Books, if our bleſſed Saviour were not God?

Next then, The *End* for which the Revelation was given him, is ſaid to be, *To ſhew unto his Servants things that muſt ſhortly come to paſs*; that is, ſhortly after the *Writing* of them by *John* ſay all Interpreters hitherto that I have ſeen or heard of: concluding hence, That the Revelation (generally ſpeaking) is a Prophecy of things that were ſhortly after the Writing of them to begin to be fulfilled; and all of them to have their Completion ſpeedily, one after another; [*See Dr.* Hammond's *Premonition to the Revelation, at the beginning.*] And yet theſe Interpreters do All (for ought I know) extend the Prophecy to the very End of things. But on the contrary, 1. The Revelation ſpeaks as well of things then Preſent, *Chap.* i. 19. and things a long while After to come to paſs; as they themſelves aknowledge. Yea, and the chief things of all, and the Moſt too, are of theſe ſorts. And 2. There was nothing ever Shewn from the Revelation to be *ſhortly* to Come to paſs, which Muſt be the meaning of *Shewn* in that place. For to give out a Prophecy in Writing that no one can underſtand, till after its Completion, cannot be ſaid to be, to *ſhew* us things

to

to come. It may *ſpeak* of *things ſhortly to come to paſs*, and *ſhew*, that the Author of the Writing fore-knew them; but it cannot be ſaid, to *ſhew* things ſhortly to come to paſs, to thoſe that underſtood nothing by it till the things were Paſt. I give out this Prophecy (ſays Chriſt) to *ſhew my Servants things ſhortly to come to paſs*, that is, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, The Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, with the enſuing Calamities on the People of the Jews. But not to inſiſt, That theſe things had been ſhewn much plainer in the *Goſpels*, *Mat.* xxiv. *Mar.* xiii. *Luke* xxiv. (Who ever diſcovered the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* in the Revelation before Dr. *Hammond*? Was then the *Revelation* given to *ſhew* the Dr. and thoſe of his Age, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and that under the notion of a thing *ſhortly to come to paſs* too? I cannot believe it! The plain meaning therefore of the Words is this, (which it is extreamly to be admired that no body has hit upon before) viz That the Revelation was given, from thence to *ſhew* unto the *Servants* of Chriſt, Some Certain things of great importance to the Church: ſo that they ſhould be able to foreſee them coming ſome little time before they were fulfilled; that is, to make the Servants of Chriſt *Prophets*. Againſt this Interpretation what can be objected, I cannot ſee; till ſome body will be ſo kind, as to make me ſenſible. But for Confirmation of it, is that which follows, *And he ſent, and ſignified* Them (not It, as our Tranſlation has it) *by his Angel, to his Servant* John. Whereby is intimated, That the things for ſhewing of which chiefly the Revelation was given, are (not *All* the Revelation which is no where ſaid to have been ſhewed by an *Angel*; but) only thoſe things which towards the End of it are expreſly ſaid to have been ſhewed to *John* by *an Angel*, diſpatcht from Chriſt to him for that purpoſe, viz. *The Viſion of the Bride, the Lambs Wife*; Or, *The new* Jeruſalem *deſcending from God out of Heaven. No Prophecy is of any private Interpretation* (ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως, of private impulſe; either as to Invention, or Interpretation) 2 *Pet.* i 20. If then the Spirit, as he is the Author, ſo muſt be the Interpreter of theſe Words, *To ſhew unto his Servants things that muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he ſent and ſignified them by his Angel to his Servant John.* How can it be expected, that he ſhould tell us plainer what things he means, than he has done, *Rev.* xxi. 9. &c. and xxii. 6, 8, 10, 12, 16. Where an Angel comes to *John*, talks with him, and takes him aſide as it were on purpoſe to ſhew him great things; telling him withal, That he is *ſent* by the *Lord God of the Holy Prophets* (*Chap.* xxii. 6.) that is, by *Jeſus*, *verſ.* 16 *to ſhew unto his Servants things that muſt ſhortly be done.* (Need any thing be plainer?) Whence I conclude; That the foreſhewing of thoſe things ſome little time before they came to paſs, was the chief end of this glorious Prophecy, The REVELATION.

The Second Verſe informs us, What *John* is here meant, to wit, the ſame, who in his Goſpel *bare Record* of the *Word of God*, and *of the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*; where *And* is taken Exegetically, as they ſpeak, *viz.* for *that is*. As if it had been ſaid, *Who bare record of the Word of God; that is, of the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*, and of *All* the mighty *Things which he ſaw* Jeſus do in confirmation of his Teſtimony. This therefore is the *Apoſtle* John, the *Beloved Diſciple*, deſcrib'd in his own Phraſeology; as may be ſeen by comparing herewith his Goſpel and Epiſtles; where he ſo frequently uſes thoſe very Expreſſions, of *bearing Record*, and the like; and inſiſts much upon his being a *preſent Witneſs* of the *Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*. And this alſo is another Enhancement of this Prophecy, viz. That it is derived from God to his *Beloved Son*, diſpatcht from the

the *Beloved Son* to his *Beloved Diſciple*. And this Point will be much illuſtrated by comparing it with what is ſaid, *Dan.* ix. 23. x. 11, 19.

The Third Verſe contains a formal denunciation of a Bleſſing to the *Reader* (that is, Interpreter, *Iſa.* xxix. 11) and to the *Hearers*, and *Obſervers* of this Prophecy; which is clear enough. But, Why is this added as the Reaſon, *For the time is at hand*? Of which no Man as yet, I think, has given any good Account. But the meaning is plainly this; For the time is now come, wherein this Prophecy was to be underſtood and rightly interpreted, or *ſhewed* to the *Servants of Chriſt*; ſo that they ſhould from thence perceive the *things ſhortly to come to paſs*, to wit, The Viſion declared by the Angel, in xxi and xxii Chapters of the Revelation aforementioned, to be Near upon fulfilling; which would be a Bleſſed thing to the Reader, Hearers, and Obſervers of this Prophecy. But to thoſe who lived at any great Diſtance from the time of its fulfilling, this Bleſſedneſs is not intended to belong; as is manifeſtly imported by the ſaid *Reaſon*, that is given for it. But then, In what reſpect is that time ſaid here to be near *at hand*? I anſwer, The Revelation is ſo contriv'd, that it was impoſſible to be underſtood without the help of that Angelical Expoſition of the Maſter-types, which is given us, *Chap.* xvii. This is plain of it ſelf; unleſs we think that the Angel there interprets them to no purpoſe; when they might as well have been underſtood without it. But now we muſt obſerve, That the Angel, that explains thoſe Myſteries, is expreſly, noted to be *One of the Angels that had the ſeven Vials*, to pour out upon *Babylon*, *Chap.* xvii. 1. Whereby is ſignified, That till the *Times* of the *Vials* (or *Laſt Plagues*, as they are called, *Rev.* xv. 1.) that Viſion of *Rev.* xvii. which is the *Key* to all the reſt, ſhould not be underſtood. This Promiſe therefore,

Bleſſed is he that readeth (or interpreteth) *&c.* could not take its true and juſt Effect, till the *Times* of the *Vials*, that is, of the Declenſion of the *Babyloniſh* Tyranny; whatever City we can imagin to be meant by *Babylon*. With reſpect to Thoſe Times therefore is that Promiſe to be underſtood, and not to any Times preceding the Vials. By all which we ſee, That this Prophecy ſhould lye dormant (as it were) till the time of the Vials; but that *then* our Bleſſed Saviour would raiſe up ſuch as ſhould interpret it to his Servants, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that ſhould be made by ſuch as would have the true meaning of the Prophecy to be ſeal'd, ſhut up, or ſtifled: For as when the Vial-Angels are ſaid to have brought ſeveral Plagues upon the adverſe party, *Rev.* xvi. we thence conclude, That therefore thoſe Plagues were really to come in the *Time* of the *Vials*: So when a Viſion is ſaid to have been ſhewed, or interpreted by a Vial Angel, we are as much oblig'd to infer there-from, That therefore that Viſion was to be Really and Eventually ſhewed or interpreted in the *Vial-times*. Thus then we ſee, the Revelation begins with addreſſing it ſelf to thoſe *Times* of the *Vials*, which were a little to precede the fulfilling of its Chief Viſion; when firſt it was to be underſtood; and in reſpect of which it bears the Title of A REVELATION. For while the Myſteries of it lay in Darkneſs, (as confeſſedly they did for many Ages, and were ſo ordain'd of God to do) it could not in any tolerable ſenſe be call'd A REVELATION, (or a Book Unſealed) to thoſe Ages.

Objection. But if a *Vial-Angel's* interpreting the Myſteries of the xvii. Chapter is an intimation, That thoſe Myſteries could not be interpreted till the *Times* of the *Vials*. And if a *Vial-Angel's* ſaying, *Seal not the Prophecy*, muſt be underſtood with reſpect to the *Times* of the *Vials*; then why muſt not a *Vial-Angel's* Expoſition of the

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ſeven *Kings*, (*Rev.* xvii.) where he ſays, *Five are fain, One is*, &c. be conceived to refer to the *Times* of the *Vials* too; as meaning, *One is* Now in the *Times* of the *Vials*, which would unjoynt the whole Prophecy? I anſwer, The Angel ſpeaks thoſe Words, *Five are fain, One is*, &c. as an *Interpreter*, and not as a *Miniſter* or *Actor* in the Viſion; as appears from *verſ.* 7, 9. And therefore he muſt be underſtood to regard the Time in which he *Really* ſpake the Words; for Otherwiſe his Interpretation would ſignifie nothing; for we ſhould ſtill be to ſeek, when the *Times* of the *Vials* were to be. But in ſaying, *Seal not the Book, for the Time is at hand*, he ſpeaks as a *Miniſter* or *Actor* in the Viſion, and muſt be underſtood *myſtically*, *viz.* with reſpect to the Part aſſigned to him in the Viſion. But further, we have this irrefragable Demonſtration, that the *One is* cannot be referr'd to the *Myſtical Time* (*viz.* the *Time* of the *Vials*) nor thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Bleſſed is he that readeth*, &c. *for the time is at hand* (anſwering to thoſe of the Angel, *Seal not the Prophecy*, that is, Read it, Interpret it, *Iſa.* xxix. 11. *for the time is at hand*) of the *Real time* that St. *John* liv'd in. For the *One is*, is the *ſixth Head* (or King.) After him is the *ſeventh*. After him again the *Eighth*; who alſo is called, *The Beaſt that was, and is not*. Together with This Beaſt, (or *Eighth King*) ariſe *Ten* other *Kings*, that for a time contribute their Power, and Strength, and Kingdom to him (that is, to the *Whore*, or *Babylon*, the City that he heads and rules in.) After this, the Friendſhip of thoſe Kings is turned to mortal Hatred. *Theſe ſhall hate the Whore* (ſays the Angel) *and ſhall make her deſolate and naked, and ſhall eat her Fleſh, and burn her with Fire*; that is, they ſhall pour out the Vials (or *Laſt Plagues*) upon her. All which is exceeding, clear beyond all poſſible Exception, from *Rev.* xvii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18. From whence we ſee, That the Vials (or Laſt Plagues) whereby *Babylon* is to be deſtroy'd come not upon the Stage, till the Ten Kings, who are to deſtroy the Whore, begin to Hate her. Between which, and the *One is*, there is interpoſed all the time of the Confederacy of the Ten Kings with the Beaſt; and alſo, all the time of the ſeventh King: So that to ſay, That the *One is* (or *Sixth King*) belongs to the time of the *Vials*, how Abſurd were it! Wherefore the *One is* cannot poſſibly be referr'd to the *Time* of the *Vials*, or *Myſtical Time*; but to the *Real Time* St. *John* liv'd in, to whom the words were ſpoken.

And on the other ſide, the Abſurdity of underſtanding thoſe words, [*Bleſſed is he that readeth*, &c. (or *ſeal not the Prophecy*) *for the time is at hand*] of the *Real Time* St. *John* liv'd in, is altogether as groſs and palpable as the other. For it is confeſt on all hands, that this Prophecy was *ſealed* (if ever Prophecy in the World were ſeal'd) and could not be *read* (as a Prophecy or Declaration of Future, things) to any purpoſe, for many Ages after. And the complaints of the skilfulleſt Divines of all Perſuaſions at this very day (to whom the obſcurity of theſe Myſteries is the pretended diſcouragement) are a ſufficient Evidence of the undeniable Truth of that Aſſertion. Wherefore if thoſe paſſages cannot be underſtood of the *Real Time* St. *John* liv'd in, they muſt relate to the *Myſtical Time* of the Angel that ſpake them to him, conſider'd as an Actor in the Vials.

If you ſtill inſiſt, the Prophecy in Saint *John*'s time was *written* for any one to read (or underſtand) that could; I anſwer, ſo was *Daniel*'s in his time *written* too, which yet was commanded to be *ſealed* (*Dan.* xii. 4.) *till the time of the end*. It is not therefore the *Writing*, but the *Underſtanding* of a Prophecy that Unſeals or Opens it. And This is Demonſtration by heap to a truly good Man, who is the only competent Judge of Diſcourſes of this nature, *Dan.* xii. 10. and who only can re-

receive Benefit by the Shewing of these Mysteries to him, *Rev.* xxi. 9. &c. xxii. 11. Insomuch that whoso is Averse to them, is manifestly deficient in one Symptom of true Goodness. And so much for the Objection.

Lastly then, as a Consectary from what has been said, we may observe, how very injudiciously those Gentlemen, who make *Rome Pagan* (and not *Papal*) to be *Babylon*, have managed their Interpretations of these Visions: For they all make the *Vials* to be emptied, and *Babylon* to have been destroy'd above a thousand years ago; but all the while they shew no true Interpretation of the xvii. Chapter to have come abroad. For Every one of them appears at the head of a new pretended Exposition of his own, so making *Vial-Angels* of Themselves (unsent by Christ, because Mistiming their designs) with no better Authorities, and Accoutrements than (perhaps) some useless *Reliques* of old Empty Vials.

But on the contrary, As for those that take a Prejudice at the *Protestant* Expositions of this Prophecy upon the account of NOVELTY; these shew as much Unskilfulness and Injudiciousness on the other hand. For according to the Protestant Scheme, the *Vials* are Now a pouring out; which hath been shewn to be the Proper Season for interpreting the xviith. Chapter. That indisputable *Key* of all the other Visions. And as for the main Vision of all, *viz.* That of *the Bride, the Lambs Wife*, &c. (when, her Enemies being subdued, the Church shall be put into a most firm and lasting state of Splendor and Tranquillity) that was to be foreshew'd but a little while afore its coming to pass, *Rev.* xxi. 9, &c. xxii. 6, 7, 10, 12, 20. As therefore they who make *Lamb's Wife* to have been come already these Thousand years in the state there described in; but do not shew the Coming *predicted* a little afore from the Visions, know not what they speak of. So we, who, being in expectation of a speedy Accomplishment of that great Revolution, are offering every soon and anon some new Exposition or other (one Right, another Wrong; and all of us anew to the matter, and according to the Ability that God giveth) act as consistently with *Our* Hypothesis, as the others inconsistently with theirs. For it is certain, That

Ours must be *New*, if they be True:
But Theirs, if True, cannot be New.

And so much for this time. If any thing here delivered be unsatisfactory or obscure, upon Notice given, I do not question, but (by God's Assistance) I shall clear it fully in the next Paper. In the mean time let the Reader that designs for any degree of Skilfulness in these Matters, take care to acquaint himself well with the xvii. Chapter (to which purpose my Exposition of that Chapter, in want of a better, may be serviceable to him;) for that Chapter, as hath been often said, (but not Too often) is the *Key* to the whole Prophecy; that till we are agreed in the sense of That, I cannot undertake to render any thing Clear, as I could wish, to him. For I confess, it is the height of my Ambition, to dismiss him at the last with all imaginable Satisfaction (such as I have my self, I bless God for it) and to leave nothing in the way, if possible, but Sun-beams to stumble at.

FINIS.